

REMARKS

Claims 1-9 and 22-26 were pending when last examined, of which Claims 22, 23, 25, and 26 stand rejected. Claim 24 is objected to but indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicant thanks the Examiner for allowing Claims 1-9.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC §102

Claims 22, 25, and 26 are rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,273,192 to Kamiya (“Kamiya”).

Claim 22 is patentable over Akimoto at least because it recites “... a cleaning member for eliminating dregs ... covering the bottom face of the receiving recession ...” As shown in the subject application, for example in FIG. 2, the cleaning member 130 is placed on the bottom face of the receiving recession 120 such that it contacts the slit nozzle 220 during the cleaning process. In Kamiya, there is no cleaning member at the bottom of the receiving recession. Kamiya’s FIG. 4, for example, shows a cross-section of the receiving recession (29) and there is no cleaning member covering its bottom face. Although the latest Office Action states that Kamiya’s annular sealing ring 21 corresponds to the “cleaning member,” the annular sealing ring 21 differs from the cleaning member both in its function and position. Specifically, the annular sealing ring 21 is not “for eliminating dregs of the material attached on ... the slit coater.” Rather, it is for sealing in the atmosphere within the air space 30 when the nozzle is in the nozzle retaining portion (Kamiya, col. 3, lines 12-15). Furthermore, the annular sealing ring 21 is formed on the side of the nozzle and does not cover the bottom face of the receiving recession (Kamiya, FIG. 2, FIG. 4, and col. 2, lines 32-33).

Claims 25 and 26 depend from Claim 22 and are patentable over Kamiya for the same reasons as Claim 22.

Claim 25 is patentable over Kamiya for the additional reason that it recites that “... the sidewall has a second injection hole, gas being sprayed via the second injection hole ...” While Kamiya discloses a second injection hole for spraying gas (N₂), this second injection hole is not on the sidewall. In both the embodiment of FIG. 2 and the embodiment of FIG. 4, the pipe 26 for carrying the gas is formed at the bottom, not on the sidewall.

Claim 26 is patentable over Kamiya for the additional reason that it recites that “... gas is sprayed via the first injection hole,” the first injection hole also being the hole via which the

cleaning material is sprayed (see Claim 22). Unlike the cleaning unit of Claim 25, Kamiya does not teach delivering both the cleaning material and the gas into the receiving recession via the same hole. Rather, Kamiya shows two distinct pipes for the two fluids: pipe 27 for supplying solvent (Kamiya, col. 3, lines 2-6) and pipe 26 for supplying the gas (Kamiya, col. 2, lines 55-57).

Claim 24 is rejected under this section but Applicants assume that this is a typographical error, as Claim 24 is indicated to be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

Claim Rejections – 35 USC §103

Claim 23 is rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,374,312 to Hasebe et al. (“Hasebe”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,019,843 to Park et al. (“Park”). This rejection assumes that Hasebe and Park teach or suggest all the elements of Claim 22 from which Claim 23 depends. However, this is not the case. For example, Hasebe and Park fail to teach or suggest that “... the cleaning member makes contact with an end portion of the slit nozzle of the slit coater. Looking, for example, at Hasebe’s FIG. 11, the cleaning member at the bottom of the cleaning section 81 does not touch the slit nozzle. Park, which teaches an apparatus for coating a semiconductor wafer with photoresist, also fails to teach a cleaning member that fits the description of Claim 22. Given that Hasebe and Park, even in combination, fail to teach all the elements of Claim 22, Claim 23 is patentable over Hasebe and Park.

Conclusion

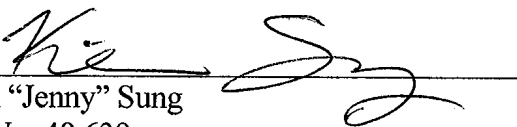
For the foregoing reasons, Claims 1-9 and 22-26 are now in condition for allowance. The Examiner is invited to call Applicant's attorney at the number below in order to speed the prosecution of this application.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any deficiencies in fees and credit any overpayment of fees to Deposit Account No. 50-2257.

Respectfully submitted,

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